



Cuyahoga County
Together We Thrive

Armond Budish
Cuyahoga County Executive

June 8, 2018

*Sherry Budish
6/11/18*

Council President Dan Brady
Councilman Michael J. Gallagher
Cuyahoga County Council
2079 East Ninth Street
Cleveland, OH 44115

Dear Council President Brady and Councilman Gallagher:

I am surprised that you chose to communicate your concerns through a letter, since my office is just down the hall from you. However, since you decided to write a letter, I am compelled to respond in-kind.

Thank you for your views and suggestions concerning the medical care in the jail. Of course, I share your interest in ensuring that the prisoners in our custody are provided high-quality medical care. It is my understanding that, in fact, at all times the prisoners have been receiving high-quality medical care.

In preparation for opening the Bedford Hts. jail, the Sheriff arranged to hire the additional nurses necessary to provide care. Unfortunately, at the last minute, those nurses withdrew, apparently due to salary. In order to ensure that needed medical care would be available, the Sheriff authorized hiring nurses on a temporary basis, which was done. At the same time, the Sheriff began the process to hire additional permanent nursing staff, and the administration approved additional funds for staff and salaries. Contrary to statements made at the council hearing, at no time did a crisis occur at the jail. I also note that the independent investigations of the jail performed annually by the State have given our jail medical the highest rating.

Contrary to the statements in your letter, we never proposed "privatizing" health care in the jail. As responsible stewards of the taxpayers' money, and taking very seriously our obligation to balance a very difficult budget, we did consider issuing an RFP to determine whether there might be some other options available to provide high-quality care at a lower cost. It should be noted that Council recently approved switching medical providers at the Juvenile Detention Center from MetroHealth to University Hospitals. Yet, in the case of the jail, Council clearly expressed its opposition to even look at other alternatives.

We appreciate your suggestion that the County discuss "bringing the nurses' unit under MetroHealth." In fact, the current arrangement, with the County hiring the nurses under MetroHealth's medical oversight is quite odd. It should be noted that this arrangement was previously approved by Council before this administration took office. It should also be noted that, while our nurses belong to a union with the right to collectively bargain, those at MetroHealth do not.

Finally, we appreciate your offer to provide additional funding for nurses' salaries. It should be noted that the nurses' salaries have been set and agreed upon between the administration, Council and the union. And it should also be noted that we must operate under a very tight, balanced, budget. So along with your generous offer to provide additional funds for jail healthcare, I look forward to your suggestions as to which programs should be cut to pay for it.

We would be happy to engage in further conversations, preferably in person.
Again, thank you for your suggestions.

Very Truly Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Armond Budish". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "B".

Armond Budish